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An Evaluation of Compensation Packages and its Influence on Teacher's Retention Rate: A Case of Selected Secondary Schools in Ngoundere, Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

Teacher retention is a major problem for academic institutions of all sizes. Though there are many factors that contribute to teacher retention, compensation is one of the most important. This review article evaluates the influence of compensation packages in maintaining teacher retention, paying close attention to two major institutions in the Adamawa region of Cameroon. This review article identified the various compensation packages and how it affect educators' decisions to remain in their roles. As Cameroon grapples with teacher shortages and frequent turnover in both public and private institutions, the research provides evidence-based insights into how compensation packages can be leveraged to address these challenges. The study examines key components of compensation, including salaries and allowances, health and retirement benefits, and performance-based incentives. It employs a quantitative research design using structured questionnaires administered to a sample of teachers and educational administrators across multiple institutions. Statistical analyses, including multiple linear regressions, were conducted to assess the relationship between compensation packages and teacher retention rates. Findings reveal a significant positive relationship between compensation and teacher retention. Specifically, health and retirement benefits emerged as a strong predictor of teacher retention, followed by salaries and allowances. Conversely, the data suggests that performance-based systems alone do not significantly impact retention unless complemented by stable base compensation. The study also highlights that dissatisfaction with compensation is a leading factor behind voluntary resignations and low morale in the education sector. The implications of these findings are substantial. Educational institutions can enhance staff retention by adopting holistic compensation packages and strategies that go beyond base pay to include benefits that promote long-term financial security and job satisfaction. For policy makers, the results underline the need to reform national compensation frameworks to attract and retain qualified educators, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

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KEYWORDS: *Compensation, Benefits, Teacher Retention, Job Satisfaction.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions are no exception to the challenges of staff retention and organisational commitment especially when it comes to academic staff, as it is obvious that their retention is a strategic priority (Pienaar and Bester, 2008). Indeed, the problem of academic staff retention is global and affects both developing and industrialized countries. More than 40% of full-time faculty members in the United States had considered changing careers, according to a 2012 survey (Sanderson & Cocker, 2013). In a study conducted in Australian higher education institutions, 68% of the academic staff said they wanted to leave higher education (Yousaf, Latif, Aslam, and Saddiqui, 2014). The issue of staff retention is evident in South African higher education institutions, as data shows that a significant percentage (between 5% and 18%) of academics

leave higher education institutions (Pienaar and Bester, 2008).

The educational sector in Cameroon faces huge challenge in retaining skilled human resources. Inability to retain these teachers and lecturers has a debilitating effect on its ability to make strides. Failure to enhance retention strategies only bring about low motivation, low job satisfaction, and lack of organizational commitment among the academic staff (Folorunso, Adewale & Abodunde, 2014).

Teacher retention has become a critical issue for educational institutions in recent years, as the costs of high turnover rates can be detrimental to an institution's productivity and overall success. In today's competitive job market, retaining top talent-academic staff, is essential for maintaining a sustained productivity flow and ensuring that staff understand the institution's vision and fulfil their role's expectations. Instead, staff prefer to remain and be committed to an institution, if they feel valued, and secured by the working environment and the top management, thus providing them with benefits that meet their needs (Workable, 2023).

According to the research conducted by Al-Suraihi et al., 2021, it is deduced that staff quit their jobs for several reasons, not limited to; job stress, job satisfaction, job security, work environment, motivation, wages, and rewards. As such, educational institutions must adopt effective strategies to improve employee performance and reduce turnover. One such strategy is the implementation of competitive compensation packages. Staff retention and satisfaction are importantly influenced by compensation. Offering competitive base salaries or hourly wages is an essential factor in retaining employees, as it demonstrates that the organization values their time and energy (Forbes, 2023). As a result, this study seeks to evaluate compensation packages and its influence on teacher retention rates in selected institutions in Ngoundere, Cameroon.

1.1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The educational sector in Cameroon is currently facing a significant challenge in retaining qualified educators, which is critical for enhancing the quality of education. Despite various reforms aimed at improving the education system, high turnover rates among teachers have become a persistent issue. One of the key factors contributing to this problem is the inadequacy of compensation packages offered to educators. One of the biggest challenge for any organization is its ability to hire and retain staff. Both private and public sector organizations are experiencing this problem. Identifying factors that influence staff attraction and retention and then developing strategies to attract quality talent and to increase employee retention is essential (Sorn et al., 2023).

Many teachers in Ngaoundere report dissatisfaction with their salaries and benefits, which often does not commensurate with their qualifications, experience, and the rising cost of living. This dissatisfaction not only affects their motivation and job performance but also leads to increased attrition as talented individuals seek better opportunities in other sectors of the country (Danish and Usman 2010).

Moreover, while compensation is recognized as a vital factor in employee retention, there is limited empirical research specifically examining its influence within the context of Cameroon's educational sector. This gap in knowledge hinders the formulation of effective policies and strategies aimed at improving teacher retention (Danish and Usman 2010). Additionally, there is insufficient understanding of how compensation packages affect talent retention among educators in *Savannah bilingual college & victoria secondary school*.

Despite the recognized importance of compensation, many educators in Cameroon report dissatisfaction with their remuneration. This dissatisfaction, compounded by rising living costs, has led to increased migration of skilled teachers to other sectors or countries where compensation is more favorable. Understanding and Evaluating compensation packages is vital to retain for employers and policy makers (Sornet al., 2023).

1.2. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.2.1. Compensation

Compensation can be thought of as money paid in return for work done, as well as other benefits and services that organizations offer to their employees. Compensation can include salaries, wages, bonuses, incentives, allowances, and medical benefits that are given to employees as a result of their service to the organization. This can be a result of obligations the organization has to the employees, or it can be an incentive for employment. Remuneration is the payment an employee receives in return for his or her services to an organization. This can include a basic salary, as well as any other bonuses or other economic benefits that the employee receives during employment at any organization. Benefits can also be considered indirect compensation, including bonuses, incentives, life insurance, accident insurance, health insurance, employee contributions to retirement benefits such as gratuity, pension, pay for vacation, pay for illness/ sickness, and more.

Compensation encompasses anything an employee may want from their employer in return for their services, such as salary, benefits, and promotion opportunities. A poorly designed compensation system can lead to an unhappy workforce, which can reduce employee productivity and may cause them to leave their jobs. Compensation is important for both employees and organizations for a variety of reasons. Primarily, it is used to attract and retain employees, motivate them to perform at their best, and help to produce and reinforce desired behavior. Organizations often use compensation to try to prevent employee dissatisfaction and to motivate employees, but this may not be the best motivator in the long term (Mossbarger and Eddington, 2003). They are two mayor types of compensation;

A. Financial compensation;

Salaries and wages are the sub components of compensation package payable to employees for his/her job done in any organization. The terms 'Salaries' and 'Wages' are often used interchangeably. The main difference between salaries and wages are that salaries are a fixed payment agreed by both the organization and employee. Wages, on the other hand, may vary depending on hours worked and performance; it means Salaries are fixed in nature whereas wages are variables in nature to some extent but both depend upon nature of jog and organization as well. Salary is a regularly paid amount of money, usually paid on a weekly or less frequent basis, which is not subject to reduction based on the quality or quantity of work done. An employee can be paid on any basis; salary, hourly, commission, piece rate, flat rate, as long as they receive minimum wage for all hours performed in the pay time. Federal law states that a salaried employee is someone who is paid a set amount of money without having to worry about deductions for how much work he or she does. Salary is not always the same, regardless of the time of month, weekends and holidays, and the amount of time an employee is away from work (Babagana, A. & Dungus, B. 2015).

B. Non financial compensation;

Non-financial compensation is viewed as non-cash incentives which means do not interfere with any payments. The components of the non-financial compensation include work flexibility, recognition and training opportunities. Non-financial compensation is a cost-effective measure to compensate employees as it lasting the employees' job satisfaction without consuming a lot of company budget (Haimi et al., 2016). Gabriel and Nwaeke (2015), stated about the well-structuring of non-financial compensation is significant in determining how employees perceive it. For example, the employees perceive their organization as caring and supporting if the organization provided flexible work arrangements. Another researcher agreed that the various type of nonfinancial compensation as essential as financial compensation because it is able to enhance the satisfaction level among employees intrinsically (Tausif, 2012). Syarief et al. (2019) mentioned non-financial compensation positioned strong role in job satisfaction, especially for emotional and psychological motivation. Haider et al. (2015) also expressed that non-financial compensation plays a strong role to influence the employees' job satisfaction. Through the review of these studies, it is significant for organizations to provide well designed compensation package including non-financial compensation. However, non-financial compensation may not effective to motivate and satisfy every employee because there are still a lot of people considered money as top motivators (Agbenyegah, 2019).

1.2.2. Staff Retention;

Staff retention can be described as a strategic plan by institutions to prevent the departure of their talented staff (Ott et al., 2018). It can also be described as the implementation of policies and practices that encourage staff to be more attached to their institutions and thus stay longer (McDonnell & Wiblen, 2020). Perceived staff retention as a systematic process to attract, retain, engage, and develop, and develop talented employees. Similarly, Zainee & Puteh (2020), defined staff retention as a strategy that an institutions uses to create a work environment that makes talented staff want to stay with the institution. However, today, staff retention is seen from a wider perspective as a medium to attract and retain talented staff (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020).

Researchers agree upon Talent Management being one of the most important challenges faced by companies worldwide. This because well-executed Talent Management can contribute to competitive advantage, commonly requested among businesses today (e.g. Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Farndale et al., 2010; Meyers & van Woerkom, 2014; Schuler et al., 2011). The increased attention and focus on Talent Management, as well as shortage of talent, is due to several factors in society, e.g. generational changes, higher labour mobility and globalisation (Schuler et al., 2011;Tarique & Schuler, 2010; Thunnissen et al., 2013). Additionally, these environmental changes have a large impact on the differentiated need for talent quality, quantity and characteristics (Thunnissen et al., 2013). Dries (2013), concurs with

this and claims that retaining talents is especially difficult due to the continuous environmental and demographic changes. Lewis and Heckman (2006), add to this, that Talent Management is a key element in the process of ensuring effective performance. Furthermore, Dries (2013), argues that organisations should consider Talent Management as a mind-set and incorporate it in their corporate culture. Consequently, this makes it difficult for both managers and organisations as a whole to let Talent Management permeate the business practices (Dries, 2013).

1.2.3. Challenges of Staff Retention;

Recent studies from 2019 highlight career growth, employee well-being, competition within the industry, globalisation, and the new employment landscape as challenges in retaining talented employees (Hosen, 2022; Shahrul et al., 2021; Adnan et al., 2020; Mustapha et al., 2019; Subramaniam et al., 2019; Ilmi et al., 2019).

Adnan et al. (2020), revealed that career growth is one of the challenges in staff retention and that having a structured career growth plan helps retain talented employees. Due to the rapidly changing economic environment nowadays, businesses offer more services to gain a competitive advantage. In order to sustain and succeed, institutions require talented staff who can formulate and implement the best strategy so that they can be industry leaders (Bank Negara Malaysia, 2022). Due to this, institutions compete with each other to attract and retain talented staff by offering them better career opportunities (Theodorsson et al., 2022). This causes some to join other institutions as part of their career growth. This shows that competition in hiring and retaining talented staff does happen, as companies want to ensure that they have a competent workforce in the market.

In the academic environment, it is realized that employers have high expectations from staff as well as their ability to increase student enrollment and deliver quality services, which constantly puts staff at the position of increased workload and longer working hours without a commensurate compensation package (Ashfaq et al., 2020). Thus allowing staff to be exposed to stress over long period, which can lead to burnout or cognitive impairments (Zainal et al., 2022). This burnout could be in the form of; psychological and physical exhaustion, reduced personal accomplishements, which are likely to cause high turnover rate and low job performance (Scanlan & Still, 2019).

According to Bennell, 2004, staff retention becomes challenging, as staff face inadequate Compensation and Poor Working Conditions. This is in terms of low salaries, delayed or unpaid salaries, and a lack of career advancement opportunities are significant factors contributing to teacher attrition in Cameroon. The teaching profession is often perceived as undervalued, which is reflected in the compensation. Poor working environments, especially in rural areas, exacerbate the problem. These conditions include a lack of basic social infrastructure, inadequate housing, and limited access to ICT. The combination of these factors leads to job dissatisfaction and, ultimately, teachers leaving the profession for better opportunities. (Bennell, 2004).

In addition, there is the challenge of Teacher Shortages and Overcrowded Classrooms: Cameroon faces a critical shortage of qualified teachers, particularly in rural areas, leading to high pupil-to-teacher ratios. In some regions, the ratio exceeds 70:1, far above the UNESCO recommendation. This shortage forces teachers to handle large classes and teach subjects outside their area of expertise, leading to work overload and stress. The lack of adequate teacher training and professional development further compounds the issue, affecting the quality of education and contributing to teacher attrition. (Ndongko & Tambo, 2000).

1.3. METHODOLOGY

1.3.1. Study Area

Ngaoundere is a prominent city located in the Adamawa Region of Cameroon. It serves as the regional capital and is known for its rich cultural heritage and strategic geographical significance. Ngaoundéré has a tropical savanna climate with an average temperatures range from 15°C (59°F) at night to around 30°C (86°F) during the day. The population is ethnically diverse, including various groups such as the Gbiri-Ndi, Mbororo (Fulani), Haoussa, Mbombabale, Arabeshoua, Mouskoum and other local tribes, contributing to a rich tapestry of cultural practices and traditions. The city is home to several educational institutions; primary, secondary and even higher institutions including the University of Ngaoundéré, which offers a range of academic programs and contributes to the region's educational development.

1.3.2. Population

Demographically, as of recent estimates, Ngaoundéré has a population of approximately 200,000 residents, with apparently 10 secondary schools and over 52,000 students though this number can fluctuate with seasonal migrations and urbanization trends. The population is predominantly young, with a significant proportion under the age of 30. This youth demographic presents both opportunities and

challenges for education and employment. French and English are the official languages of Cameroon, but in Ngaoundéré, local languages such as Fulfude (spoken by the Fulani) and Gbiri-Ndi are widely used in daily life. Hence many residents are multilingual, often speaking their ethnic languages alongside French or English.

Table I: number of teachers and schools in Ngaoundere

SCHOOLS IN NGAOUNDERE	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES
Government Bilingual High School Malang	22
Government Bilingual High School Mbe	21
Mazenod Bilingual College	24
Savannah Bilingual College	31
Victory secondary school	38
Grace Bilingual Secondary School	25
Excellency Academy Bilingual Comprehensive Institute	28
College Protestant de Ngaoundere	22
College Privé Laïc Polyvalent de l'Adamaoua	26
Prebyterian Comprehensve Secondary School	23
Total number of schools : 10	Total:260

1.3.3. Population Sample and Techniques

For the purpose of this research work, the researcher targeted employees from two educational institutions; Savannah Bilingual College and Victory secondary school, totaling 69 employees. Thus, the researcher used purposive sampling technique by considering the entire number of employees as sample size. The researcher purposefully selected savanna bilingual college and victory secondary schools (purpose sampling) because it is highly populated with employees (a total of 69) and frequently experiences the problem of employee turnover.

1.4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Both Savannah Bilingual College and Victory Secondary School identified two compensation schemes; which are policies regarding salary & allowance and benefits regarding retirement & health care. The main objective of the researcher here was to evaluate the influence of compensation packages on staff retention. Analysis from the table (Table II: distribution of respondents according to their assessment on the influence of the present compensation packages on employee retention) depicts the following;

A total of 25.4% out of the 63 respondents (7.94% very satisfactory and 17.46% satisfactory) expressed their satisfaction with regards to the current salary and allowance package. In the same line, 57.14% respondents (33.33% very satisfactory and 23.81% satisfactory) also showed satisfaction with regards to the school policies on retirement and health benefits.

A total of 55.56% respondents expressed dissatisfaction (17.46% dissatisfied and 38.10% very dissatisfied) on salary and allowance bids and 22.23% respondents outlined dissatisfaction (14.29% dissatisfied and 7.94% very dissatisfied) on health and retirement benefits. A total of 19 gave a neutral attitude.

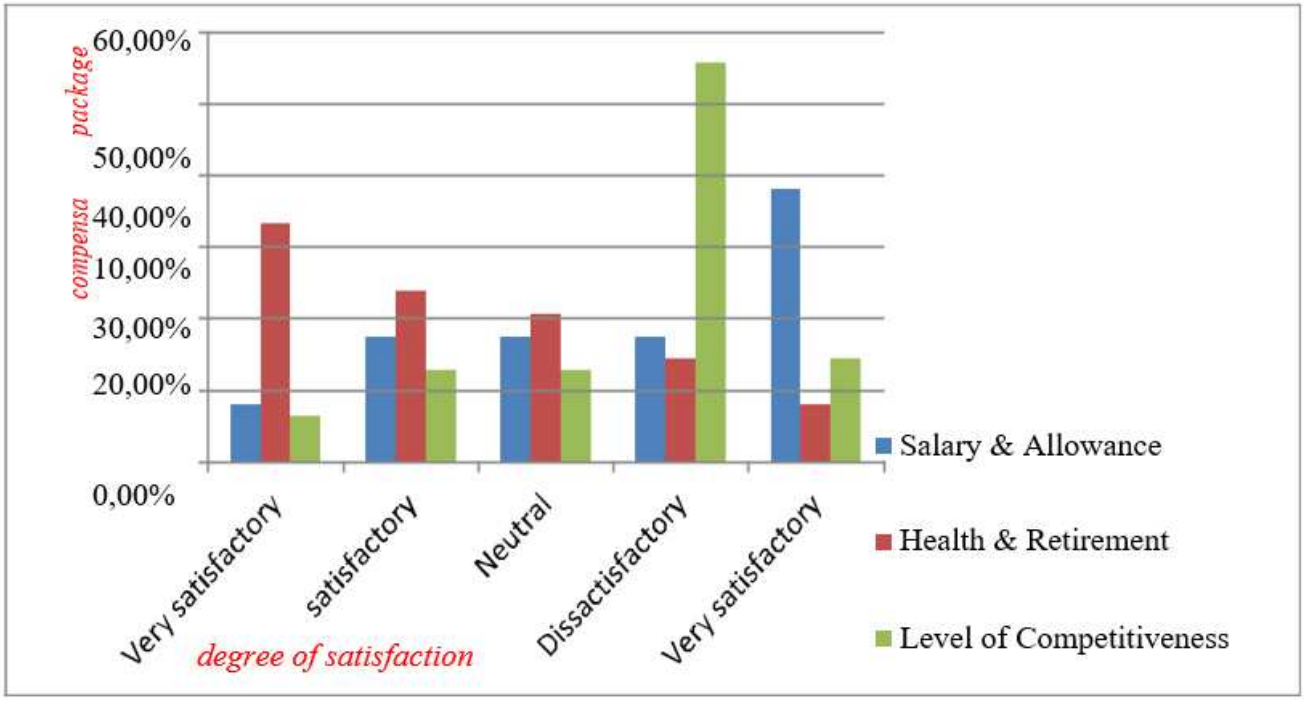
For the betterment of the study, the researcher also tried to assess employees' appreciations with regards to the level of competitiveness of the present compensation packages with others institutions and found out that 69.85% respondents (55.56% dissatisfactory and 14.29% very dissatisfactory) were totally dissatisfied with their current compensation package regarding other schools in the educational industry.

Table II: distribution of respondents according to their assessment on the influence of the present compensation packages on employee retention

Level of Satisfaction	Salary & Allowance	Health & Retirement	Level of Competitiveness
Very satisfactory	7.94%	33.33%	6.35%
satisfactory	17.46%	23.81%	12.70%
Neutral	17.46%	20.63%	12.70%
Dissatisfactory	17.46%	14.29%	55.56%
Very dissatisfied	38.10%	7.94%	14.29%

Source: Field Study,2025.

Fig 1: evaluation of the influence of current compensation packages



Source: Field Study, 2025.

1.4.1. Hypothesis Test: Relationship between Compensation package and staff Retention;

(H_0): There is no significant relationship between the current compensation package and retention of staff.
(H_1): There is a significant relationship between the current compensation package and retention of staff.

Dependent Variable: Retention

Independent Variables: Flat Salary & Allowances and Health & Retirement Benefits

R-squared	Adjusted R-squared	F-statistic	Prob (F-statistic):
0.946	0.891	17.37	0.0544

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Value	p-Value	95% CI
Intercept	-2.2965	1.241	-1.850	0.206	[-7.638, 3.045]
Salary & Allowances	0.2198	0.068	3.247	0.083	[-0.071, 0.511]
Health & Retirement	0.2006	0.035	5.702	0.029	[0.049, 0.352]

Source: Field Study, 2025.

Health & Retirement Benefits have a statistically significant positive relationship with retention (**p = 0.029**), meaning as these benefits increase, retention tends to increase.

Salary & Allowances show a positive but not statistically significant effect (**p = 0.083**) at the 5% level, though it might be considered suggestive with a larger sample.

Model R^2 = 0.946: The model explains 94.6% of the variance in teacher retention, indicating a very strong fit.

The overall model's **p-value is 0.0544**, slightly above the standard 0.05 cutoff—likely due to the small sample size (n = 5). There is statistical evidence supporting a significant relationship between compensation packages and teacher retention, primarily driven by health and retirement benefits.

1.5. IMPLICATION

Health & Retirement Benefits are a **key driver** of teacher retention. Enhancing these packages could yield substantial improvements in retention.

Salary & Allowances also matter, but their influence is **less robust** statistically. Still, dissatisfaction here (38.10% very dissatisfied) suggests urgent attention is needed.

Level of Competitiveness shows high dissatisfaction (55.56%), which may indirectly affect retention and should be explored in future models.

1.6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

1.6.1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The creation of programs for continuous professional development, including training and workshops, which can enhance teachers' skills and improve on

employees' career progression, making them feel valued. Moreover, retention bonuses or incentives for teachers who stay in their positions for extended periods, particularly in underserved areas should be considered.

Implementation of regular job satisfaction surveys to gather feedback from employees about their compensation and working conditions, using this data to inform policy changes should be implemented.

1.6.2. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the research highlights that compensation significantly influences teacher retention in the educational sector of Cameroon. Adequate salaries, combined with comprehensive non-monetary benefits and professional development opportunities, are essential for maintaining a stable and motivated teaching workforce. Addressing disparities in compensation across regions and implementing targeted incentives can enhance job satisfaction and commitment among educators. Ultimately, improving compensation structures not only benefits teachers but also enriches the educational experience for students, contributing to a more effective and resilient educational system in Cameroon.

1.7. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. Exploring comparative studies between different regions or countries to understand how varying compensation structures impact teacher retention in diverse contexts.
2. Using qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, to gain deeper insights into employees' experiences and perceptions regarding compensation and job satisfaction.
3. Researching the perspectives of other stakeholders, such as parents, students, and school administrators, on the importance of teacher compensation and its effects on educational quality.

By exploring these avenues, future research can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing teacher retention and inform effective policy decisions in the educational sector.

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